

Key: UM = Unidentified Male Speaker

Translator comments, clarifications, and additions are italicized in brackets

[The recording starts mid-sentence. It seems that Saddam is reading a statement.]

Saddam Hussein: In the nation of Arabs and Islam. O, benevolent in the world, the deceptive enemy has carried out its evil assault against the front of the 14th, 18th, 29th, 8th, 26th, and 45th Divisions of the 3rd, 7th, and 1st Corps of Jihad and faith, and also on the brave Naval Infantry Forces in Failaka Island. As to the aggressors mentioned, the assault began at 0400 hours, meaning at 4:00 this morning, February 24, 1991. Despite the time that has elapsed, and just as our Commander Saddam Hussein expected, as he said in his speech this morning, the enemy continues to fight at the front of most divisions and troops — at the front of most divisions of the covering troops who are small in number, but who are believers in God, who gave them more strength and guidance. We are saying that the enemy continues, in most of the combat axes, to drown in his own blood and shame before the fronts of the covering troops, who do not exceed the infantry regiments in number, at the defense position of each division that we mentioned. In addition, the enemy has made contact with the front of other regiments of some brigades of the original position. Despite all that has happened, our faithful men were able to drive off the first surprise attack and contain the malicious attempted attacks on the front of all divisions and corps that we already mentioned. In general, our troops are in the best possible shape given the current situation. So far, the enemy's attack has failed completely and the scoundrel enemy continued calling for help while drowning in his blood at the front of the 26th, 45th, 29th, and 8th Divisions. Furthermore, on Failaka Island, our troops remain steadfast, thwarting the attempts of the deceptive enemy, contrary to what they announced about being able to bring the island and our troops under their control. The combat continues with the troops at the front position of the 14th and 18th Divisions, and the situation is under excellent control. The attacking enemy troops are being exposed to the deadly fire of our brave troops. This is how our troops absorbed... *[Saddam stutters]* the enemy's attack.

Tariq Aziz: Good morning, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: Hello.

Tariq Aziz: *[Laughing.]*

Saddam Hussein: What a pleasant surprise! Are you up to surprises like Bush? *[Laughing.]*

Tariq Aziz: God willing, Sir, you and Iraq will be victorious and proud.

UM1: Thank God for bringing you back safe.

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[*They all exchange greetings to start the meeting.*]

UM2: [*Whispering.*] This is theirs, Sir, [*inaudible*] written on it.

Saddam Hussein: Yes, in general.

UM2: Yes, Sir, I will [*Inaudible*].

Saddam Hussein: [*Apparently continuing reading*] and our troops, in general, are in the best possible shape they can be in given the current situation. The scoundrel enemy's attack has so far failed completely and he has continued calling for help while drowning in his own blood at the front of the 26th, 45th, 29th, and 8th Divisions. Furthermore, on Failaka Island, where our troops remain steadfast, thwarting the attempts of the deceptive enemy, contrary to what they have announced of being able to bring the island and our troops under their control. The combat continues with the troops at the front position of the 14th and 18th Divisions, and the situation is under total control. The attacking enemy troops are being exposed to the deadly fire of our brave troops. Our troops have thus absorbed the enemy's attack and thwarted the attack of the army of 30 countries. This way—

Tariq Aziz: They contained...

Saddam Hussein: Contained, yes... contained... our troops have thus contained the enemy's attack and thwarted the attack of the army of the 30 failing countries, led by Bush, the enemy of God and humanity. We have the right now, and will also have it in the future, God willing, to chant with a strong and loud voice, "O, what a sweet victory with the help of God. God is great and let the despicable be defeated!" Huh?

UM1: [*Inaudible.*]

Saddam Hussein: [*Laughing.*]

UM1: [*Inaudible.*]

Saddam Hussein: Give it to Comrade Latif so that he can take it.

UM1: Yes, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: And tell Comrade Jabar not to announce any local news.

UM1: Yes, Sir; whatever you say.

Saddam Hussein: Comrade Latif, you can go now because you still have other political obligations to fulfill so that our people can hear about the development of our army. [*Apparently addressing one of his staff*] Escort Comrade Latif.

UM3: Yes, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: Something happened yesterday. I exchanged letters with him [*unspecified*] yesterday; have you seen them? That is to say, I was worried yesterday, just as if I knew he would betray us, this scoundrel!

Tariq Aziz: But the Soviets, I mean, in addition to weakness, and even [*inaudible*], I was with them yesterday. I mean we met around 11:00 yesterday morning.

Saddam Hussein: Is it possible that their intelligence service is not aware of this?

Tariq Aziz: Primakov. They did not say they received such news. We discussed the future measures they will be implementing at the Security Council, and he [*Primakov*] told me about the communications conducted by Gorbachev. When we were leaving, Primakov told me, “[*Inaudible, Saddam was clearing his throat*] they shortened them.” I said, “Yes, I talked with him, with the president, and the other one last night. We have a large force and millions of tons of equipment, not to mention the weapons [*inaudible*]. He insisted. I said, “Look, Primakov, do not ask me for anything, you will be attending the Security Council meeting and if you wish to shorten the period by one, two, or three days, that is up to you. I mean do not ask me for three days. I talked with Gorbachev on the phone because he was busy and could not meet with me. I thanked him for his efforts, saying “Mr. President thanks you for your efforts and we want you now to be firm in handling the American aggression.” “We will do our best in laying out the new foundation that we will keep,” he replied. I left around 2:00 in the afternoon. We arrived in Amman and they said that the Security Council meeting had begun. We continued following the news of the Security Council meeting on CNN and other media networks until night time. They showed the Soviet ambassador, who stated, “We have our proposal and the American statement. We can do—

Saddam Hussein: Reconciliation.

Tariq Aziz: Reconciliation between the two. It is important to have this reconciliation. I was really tired. I went to bed by 11:30, but woke up by midnight and stayed up until the morning [*inaudible*].

Saddam Hussein: Let us hope for the best, God willing.

Tariq Aziz: Let us hope for the best, God willing. Sir, these are dogs, and if we do not cause them to bleed, we will not get any results.

Saddam Hussein: Yes

Tariq Aziz: They have been striking us for 38 days and they have not suffered any losses. We must—

UM4: Today we will have the fewest possible losses.

Tariq Aziz: We suffered a lot of material losses, so let them loose and let them get slaughtered. Let us pray to God to grant us success to slaughter any number of them. This is what is going to help us get results. The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs told me yesterday, when we were in the car, “Bush is going to be in a very difficult position because — what is the statement? It is true that our statement implies threat and warning. However, the elements — for instance, he is asking for one week to withdraw while we said three weeks. Okay, between one week and three there is one week of [*inaudible, voices overlapping*].

[*Time stamp: 10:35*]

UM4: [*Inaudible*] time.

Tariq Aziz: As for the prisoners, we said three days while he said two. These are things... in any political or military action. One should not really elaborate on such an issue.

UM4: The sanctions are still [*inaudible*].

Tariq Aziz: No, regarding the sanctions, of course this [*inaudible*].

Saddam Hussein: He meant it.

Tariq Aziz: No, he meant it.

Saddam Hussein: He meant it.

Tariq Aziz: He meant it. He even said it in his speech. He said, “If the sanctions were lifted, Saddam Hussein would use his materials to build his military force and [*inaudible*]. However, it is those other ignoble people like Mitterrand and [*inaudible*].” He said they are considerate. The initiative, Sir, had an echo [*was welcomed*] [*inaudible*] the news in Moscow is limited since there are not many news sources; however, there are many countries like Germany, the Pope, Italy—

Saddam Hussein: Italy and Spain.

Tariq Aziz: And Spain and all non-alignment countries. They all had the capability to scrutinize. But he is a dog. The goal, Sir, is obvious. Regardless of the [*inaudible*] of the Soviet initiative, it means keeping the Iraqi army as is. They want to strike the army. It is clear.

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UM5: Do you think, Abu-Ziyad [*Tariq Aziz*], that it is within the initiative? I mean it appears that Bush intended in his plan to strike the Iraqi army. This means the army will be struck, should we accept.

Tariq Aziz: Yes, yes.

UM4: He has been saying for a week that our air cover must remain above our flags.

Tariq Aziz: What they have been saying to start with—

[*Time stamp: 12:25*]

Saddam Hussein: The air cover must remain over Kuwait, and the Kuwaitis will be able to enter the city. Practically, they will be behind our troops stretched along the coast, and they would block the transportation roads. Do our troops have the ability to go along the shoreline and then come back?

UM4: Al-Zubayr is to the right [*inaudible*].

UM5: Yes, Sir, we have a plan for the coast, but they still have to pass by the intersection of cover, like your Excellency had mentioned.

Tariq Aziz: Sir, where are the axes of the attack? Is it also like it was planned through Saudi Arabia and—

Saddam Hussein: It is not going to arrive.

UM2: Yes, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: Do you have any indication? Maybe the escorts do.

Tariq Aziz: No, let them join, Sir, we are—

UM4: The Americans and the French are attacking now.

Saddam Hussein: I wish they came at that time!

Tariq Aziz: [*Inaudible.*] The French are attacking?

UM5: Yes.

Saddam Hussein: They are attacking. They are by the division sitting and crying.

Tariq Aziz: The French?

Saddam Hussein: Yes.

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UM5: [*Inaudible.*]

Saddam Hussein: They were asking for help when they had not even participated yet!

Tariq Aziz: They are just one division. This Mitterrand is a fox [*“fox” is used to describe someone sly, inaudible*].

UM4: [*Inaudible.*]

Saddam Hussein: Mitterrand is very despicable.

Tariq Aziz: Despicable.

UM5: The attack began with the 14th Division that is in the direction of the Al-Manaqish axis that we talked about, and said it is the shortest way to Kuwait.

Tariq Aziz: To the city.

UM5: To the city. The attack started [*inaudible*]. The attack or the contact began more than 36 hours with the covering troops.

Tariq Aziz: The advancement of the British division was correct [*i.e. succeeded*] at the beginning of the attack. I told the ambassador, but he said, “No, these are just skirmishes.” Yesterday, the Jordanians—Hussein Bin Shaker—said this is the Western style of the ground attack [*inaudible*].

Saddam Hussein: Probing.

Tariq Aziz: The armors, weapons and [*inaudible*] before starting the attack.

Saddam Hussein: Hmm!

UM5: The attack started on the covering troops that continued—

Tariq Aziz: This is the same British Division in its location?

UM5: Yes, they drew out the British Division by testing it the day before yesterday.

Tariq Aziz: Yes.

UM5: However, it was the American division along with elements from the participating Egyptian division that started the attack on the 14th Division that is here.

Tariq Aziz: Egyptian?

UM5: Egyptian. It is also possible that the armored brigade did not arrive with the American-Egyptian division. It was the assessment of our people that it is an entire armored division, but our assessment is a division plus a brigade... an armored division plus a brigade. The division continued engaging where it had first seized one of the front regiments of the 83rd Brigade and then the 426th Brigade. Approximately two hours ago, they were able to seize most of the front positions of the front regiments. It is possible that in a short period of time the front positions of the division [*inaudible*]. They are trying to head toward Al-‘Abdaliyah because it is located on the [*inaudible*] road leading directly to Kuwait, and also so that they can be behind the 7th Division that is holding the northern wing of the division’s main axis. The 7th Division is still [*inaudible*]. They also launched an offensive on the covering troops of the 29th Division; they are still fighting but have not accomplished anything yet.

UM4: Where were the French? Were the French in Al-Msayyed?

UM5: The French were at Al-Msayyed which is located to the north of Hafr al-Baten; Al-Msayyed leads to Al-Nasiriyyah. I believe they want to strike the right wing of the Republican Guard troops, or to force the Republican Guard forces to come out in their direction so that the air force can strike the Republican Guard troops and eliminate them.

Saddam Hussein: The Republican Guard troops should come out today then and slaughter them if the air force is not efficient.

UM5: Yes, Sir. It is a little bit far, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: Far, yes; if it is far then no.

UM5: [*Inaudible*] in the day time. The 8th Division attacked the covering troops in Al-Ansar and they reached the Al-Shahid army. The armored brigade attacked the 18th Division located by the coast that is near and also leads them directly to Al-Ahmadi city. They seized the 3rd Regiment of our 95th Brigade, along with the covering troops pushed to the front more than four or five kilometers.

[*Time stamp: 18:10*]

Tariq Aziz: But it was not a big force!

[*Overlapping voices.*]

UM5: The 26th Division—

Saddam Hussein: What is the name of the American armored division?

UM5: I do not know exactly, Sir.

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UM4: But they said it is at the battlefield of the...

UM5: It is at the—

Saddam Hussein: At the division front?

UM5: At the 14th Division's front, Sir. Exactly across from the 14th Division, there is the 3rd Mechanized Egyptian Division, the 24th Mechanized Division, and the 1st American Division. One of them, Sir; I do not want to say which one if I am not sure.

Saddam Hussein: That is fine.

[*An unidentified male mumbles in the back mentioning the Egyptian division.*]

UM6: They were saying in the news—

UM5: The French...

UM6: There was an airdrop attempt to the south of Iraq, [*inaudible*] the palace and so on; I mean on Bobian and so on.

Saddam Hussein: They all have troops.

UM5: These are the two directions, Mr. [*inaudible, in response to UM6*]. The first direction is at the 26th Division toward Al-Qusayyer, while the other one toward Rabha. To the north of the 1st Division they have the 101st Division and the 82nd Paratrooper Division.

Saddam Hussein: Yes.

UM5: I mean I would like to point out, Sir, that one should pay attention to this situation, Sir. That is to say, we are moving the Republican Guards out of fear of this situation. As Your Excellency remembers, the last report, it was about taking precautionary measures regarding this sector, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: Which sector?

UM5: The sector that is in the direction of the [*inaudible*]. Although they are two limited attacks, Sir, or the beginning of two limited attacks in the direction of Al-Qusayyer and Salman, in the direction of Salman that leads to Al-Samawa. However, the main thing that makes it complete is the [*inaudible*]. The 101st Division and the 82nd Paratrooper Division have not yet moved from their positions. Therefore, their presence here, Sir, requires one's attention to the left wing. In our last report, we suggested placing a reserve division by Karbala, for which Your Excellency had previously given guidance in this regard and yet we said it is a matter of deliberation. Therefore, Sir, we were reassured of Turkey yesterday [*inaudible*]. We have an armored Republican Guard

division that we keep as a precaution; meaning so that we will not be forced to move from the Kuwait region, Sir, an armored Republican Guard division or an armored division of the 7th Corps and let it fight with the air force.

[*Time stamp: 21:10*]

Saddam Hussein: They should not move. Where would they go?

UM4: So that they will not come.

Saddam Hussein: So that they will not come to the city?

UM5: We have the division in Turkey, about which Your Excellency reassured us that there is nothing to worry. We have an armored division, why don't we bring it so that it becomes a self-acting force—

Saddam Hussein: I say let us lure them so that they will come... let them enter the city...

Tariq Aziz: Let them enter the city.

Saddam Hussein: So that it will turn into a cemetery for them.

[*Inaudible background talk.*]

Saddam Hussein: I did not want to play with our reserves while we were on the verge of a war, which is why I did not agree with the suggestion.

UM5: Excuse me, Sir, the thing that encouraged us to approach Your Excellency with the suggestion is because you previously told us, "Here, you have the division; you can move it whenever you want to in the direction of—"

Tariq Aziz: By God, I [*inaudible*].

Saddam Hussein: Yes.

UM5: That is the reason.

Saddam Hussein: Yes, since the attack has started now, let us keep our balance.

UM5: Yes, Sir.

UM4: But the French and the Egyptians—

Saddam Hussein: Because what caught my attention was the resignation of the new Minister of Defense.

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Tariq Aziz: Who is he?

Saddam Hussein: The Turk. This means he asked us for the same thing. It means with the ground attack being imminent, he asked us to prepare the participation plans to engage us.

Tariq Aziz: No, we must not accept.

UM5: This is his nephew; the nephew of the Minister of Defense, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: And he resigned?

UM5: And he resigned.

Saddam Hussein: Yes, this means he is not convinced of his position.

Tariq Aziz: [*Inaudible*] Guzel.

Saddam Hussein: Guzel is a traitor and an agent like Hosni [*Mubarak*].

Tariq Aziz: He cut all relations with us.

UM5: No, if this should happen we would have no choice but to strike [*inaudible*].

Saddam Hussein: No, let them. To the contrary, let them come to Karbala city, and it will become their cemetery.

UM4: I believe it will have a [*inaudible*] benefit?

Tariq Aziz: It has a political benefit.

UM4: A political benefit and—

Tariq Aziz: I wish the people of Karbala [*inaudible*].

UM4: I mean [*inaudible*].

Tariq Aziz: An Islamic city—

Saddam Hussein: Even a military benefit. They will enter the city.

UM4: They will not be able to bear it.

Tariq Aziz: Until Iran joins them.

UM4: However, I believe the French will get something. They will not go back. [*Inaudible*] their regiments [*inaudible*].

UM5: Well, they attacked two combat groups. I believe they are two combat groups, and each group consists of 12 tanks but with heavy helicopters. Their force has helicopters, about 200-300 helicopters.

Saddam Hussein: To support the force.

UM5: And we are still working on the armor in the front, preparing them to fire at the helicopters that were firing at the troops from a distance.

[Inaudible background talk.]

UM7: Let them stay in front of us so that we can strike them.

UM5: We fear the movement of the troops in the front.

UM4: Yes.

Saddam Hussein: Let us say their air superiority limits our movements a bit.

UM5: In addition to this Sir, you know the situation of our units, thanks to Your Excellency. That is to say, it is a small possibility, but there are 30 kilometers between each brigade; it is a gap.

Tariq Aziz: The important thing is that our units' attack against that army be strong.

Saddam Hussein: By God, our units remain excellent.

UM5: At six o'clock, they made an announcement saying, —Since our assault, five hundred have surrendered," *[inaudible]*, just as I spoke with so and so, such as the Staff Brigadier General Abud from the force, he read me a correspondence, stating, "Until now," meaning eleven-thirty, saying, "Until now, the army corps has been hit with more than five hundred artillery shells."

Tariq Aziz: Now it is downgraded to a media and psychological war.

UM5: In addition, they began saying, "Sections of Iraqis began surrendering by the thousands."

UM4: Yes, the media is dirty.

Saddam Hussein: What would they give—they would announce things they hope would occur or that they expect to occur.

UM5: This is what encourages them, Sir. They have a different picture than what they expected.

Saddam Hussein: I have said that before.

UM5: Through those who went to them; whoever goes talks like them.

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Tariq Aziz: Whoever goes to them is a coward.

Saddam Hussein: Do you expect him to say other than what he wishes for others? [*Laughing.*]

Tariq Aziz: [*Inaudible.*]

[*Time stamp: 25:50*]

UM4: We are waiting for the weather to get better.

Saddam Hussein: This means their weather forecast is incorrect!

UM4: There are storms.

Tariq Aziz: Are there storms at the airport?

[*Inaudible background talk.*]

Tariq Aziz: Flights are not heavy over the airport.

UM5: It was very limited to the point where the 3rd Corps commander moved the tank battalion of his mechanized regiment to be behind the 14th Division and within the [*inaudible*].

Tariq Aziz: Sir, Bush rushed into the ground attack and [*inaudible, voices overlapping*].

Saddam Hussein: Because of the political position.

Tariq Aziz: They were in a rush. They did not expect us to agree [*to the 22 February Soviet ceasefire proposal*]. They thought we would put forth other conditions. So, when they realized that...

Saddam Hussein: They expected us to disagree with the Soviets and it would then become a conflict between the Soviets and us, next, they would continue to—So that they could say “Now you see the other side of them!”

Tariq Aziz: The statement you also issued—he wanted to play on your speech; even the Soviets, when I arrived in the airport, he said, “Did you hear the speech of the President [*Saddam Hussein*]? It was strong and tough. Is there any change? Are you here to say the same?” I said, “No, I have instructions from Mr. President, [*inaudible*] positive [*inaudible*], because Mr. President gave a tactical and enthusiastic speech for the Arabs and not the political front.” So, when I went, he gave me more details on the speech when we met with Gorbachev. They are—I don’t know about the Soviets, we have a position [*inaudible*]. When he tried—

Saddam Hussein: However, when I realized they were going to play around, I thought we must—

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Tariq Aziz: Yes, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: Get the Command to issue a statement on our behalf.

Tariq Aziz: I did receive the statement and I called the [inaudible]. I said, “This is not just a statement, but also a statement with a confirmation on the [inaudible] of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, because there is no [inaudible]. It became a race against time, that is to say, we talked for hours—

Saddam Hussein: But the most important thing to me was to make sure there would not be any confusion.

Tariq Aziz: Yes.

Saddam Hussein: Regarding the Soviet initiative and our approval of it.

Tariq Aziz: There is not any confusion.

Saddam Hussein: So, the last thing is that, yesterday at 11:00, we issued a statement in the name of the Deputy Director of the Revolutionary Command Council attacking Bush, his devious methods, his stands against dealing with the Soviet initiative, his persistence in continuing the aggression, and that our troops are not going to be deceived by playing on words in this direction. Wasn't the statement issued?

UM2: Yes, Sir.

Tariq Aziz: I held a press conference, Sir—

Saddam Hussein: And we emphasized in the statement our commitment to what Tariq agreed on.

Tariq Aziz: At 12:00, [inaudible], I delivered a very short statement before the international press and [inaudible], saying that the Soviet and Arab initiative is approved by the [inaudible], and read them its elements. I also denied Turkey's allegations regarding the oil wells and this [inaudible]. The Revolutionary [Command] Council called for an investigating committee [inaudible].

Saddam Hussein: We did not deny it in the way that [inaudible].

Tariq Aziz: I denied it; I am the one who did it.

Saddam Hussein: Yes.

Tariq Aziz: I did this [inaudible].

Saddam Hussein: That is to say, let an investigation committee come and examine the locations being struck in Iraq and anywhere else, including other locations in Iraq and Kuwait.

Tariq Aziz: I understood the language of the statement; however, I was forced to—

Saddam Hussein: In order for the committee to see which one of these locations was struck for military purposes and which one was struck for others.

Tariq Aziz: But I was able to handle the situation and said “These are American allegations and we hereby ask—

Saddam Hussein: They would not agree, because the committee would find out that all the targets were struck in Iraq for non-military reasons, while we struck the oil wells for military reasons and to cause obscurity [*i.e. to darken the skies*].

Tariq Aziz: They came out at night [to check] and said there were 200 wells.

Saddam Hussein: We set them all on fire.

[*Time stamp: 31:00*]

UM4: [*Inaudible*] it will become blacker. Once the rain stops the density will increase, because the rain is going to wash away the smoke. Aviation might continue to be a problem, which would work out to our advantage because their ground forces rely on their air force, Mr. President.

Saddam Hussein: Generally, we rely on our fighters, because of our experience in the eight straight years of war.

Tariq Aziz: What we need to watch out for is the media.

Saddam Hussein: Yes.

UM4: Because even our front units and their commanders are not safe.

Saddam Hussein: But what is important here is that our artillery does not stop when the enemy’s troops infiltrate in depth. What used to happen to us before when we did not receive accurate information on the location of our troops and the enemy’s troops? Therefore, the enemy’s troops would continue bombing freely because no artillery was firing at them and confusing them. Therefore, any firing on the enemy’s troops, even in the direction of Al-Wafra, would exhaust them, even if it were the firing of artillery alone!

[*Inaudible background talk, voices overlapping.*]

Saddam Hussein: Now these troops that infiltrated and that broke through the defensive position and entered, the ones that were said to be trying to shift, are they under fire?

UM7: Lieutenant General Sultan told me that Lieutenant Salah was very satisfied with his arrangements; the same issue Your Excellency talked about.

Saddam Hussein: He is an experienced man, poised, and detailed.

UM7: He said a tank battalion and a mechanized regiment from the 8th Brigade would stay on the road. He told them from the beginning, Sir, there was a concentration on the 14th Division near Karbala, because it was in the direction of—therefore, he pushed the 8th Brigade [*inaudible, Saddam is clearing his throat*].

Tariq Aziz: This is the zone of the 3rd Corps in Al-Hasib.

Saddam Hussein: Huh?

UM7: So he pushed the tank battalion, Sir, directly to the positions behind the division and he said the artillery was active. I asked him about it several times and he said, “It is very active, free, and organized.” He brought more battalions to support the 14th Division. I said [*inaudible, voices overlapping*]. He replied, “No, there is no aviation.”

[*Inaudible background talking, voices overlapping.*]

Tariq Aziz: From Traibil to Baghdad and on the road to Jordan, we did not hear the noise of any aircraft.

UM8: From where?

Tariq Aziz: From the Jordanian borders to Baghdad—we were going 150, 140, and sometimes 180, but no—

UM4: Was it cloudy on your way?

Tariq Aziz: No, it was sunny.

Saddam Hussein: Nothing happened.

Tariq Aziz: Ours was sunny but the clouds were far away.

Saddam Hussein: Maybe over there [*inaudible, voices overlapping*].

UM8: Didn't they destroy the road?

Tariq Aziz: We did not take the new road but rather the old one. No matter how much it is struck, even if it has one pothole, one can go around it because the road is not high, but low. The important thing is to see the pothole during the daytime.

Saddam Hussein: But it is dangerous at night and one can [*inaudible*].

Tariq Aziz: Sir, they have advised us now not to come, because I arrived in the afternoon and said we should leave at night. He said, “No, do not leave at night, because we now have the political correspondence group that knows the road; they know the last stop.” Therefore, we brought three of them who were going to accomplish a task. They became our guides and came with us in the same car. They were guiding us and pointed out the potholes for us so we would avoid them [*Saddam talks aside with someone a low voice*]. The road between Traibil and Rutbah, which is 120 kilometers, is in good condition and there is nothing.

UM4: No, I believe—

[*Time stamp: 36:00*]

Tariq Aziz: The rest has some interruption. But the old road is fine, we had a Mercedes and we were going an average of 140 kilometers.

Saddam Hussein: That was good.

Tariq Aziz: It took us less than five hours from the Iraqi side to Baghdad.

UM4: But Mudhar Badran was going 260 on the highway.

Saddam Hussein: 260?

Tariq Aziz: We were going 220 on the highway. Between Traibil and Rutba we were going 220.

[*UM4 is talking in a low voice in the back, probably to Saddam.*]

UM4: You can fly the helicopter at 180.

Tariq Aziz: The helicopter [*laughing*].

UM4: Helicopter [*inaudible*].

Tariq Aziz: What a road. It was excellent; this was the first time I took it.

UM4: We are talking about the highway here [*inaudible*].

Tariq Aziz: This road has three car lanes each way.

UM4: [*Inaudible.*] This is considered the best, longest, and fastest highway in a single country that runs from the south to the borders [*inaudible*]. It is continuous. It is possible to see a highway like this one between countries, but not within one country.

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Tariq Aziz: Yes, but can the Jordanians complete this highway to reach Jordan?

UM4: Yes.

Tariq Aziz: I mean between Jordan and us.

UM4: We [*inaudible*] it supposedly they [*the Jordanians*] who would finish it and [*inaudible*].

Tariq Aziz: The road is destroyed. They brought me in the helicopter to Amman.

UM4: Mr. President, God help us today and tomorrow; these two days. Whoever comes today—

Saddam Hussein: God is gracious; God willing!

UM4: [*Inaudible*] we do not need him.

UM5: We do not need him.

UM4: Two days... we shall strike them with the artillery for two days.

UM5: Even today, Sir, if they [*the enemy*] do not accomplish anything—

Saddam Hussein: Even if they do not accomplish anything within 24 hours, they will get injured.

UM5: Do not expect anything from them. Sir, these initiatives—I mean our initiative and the Soviet initiative offer great moral support to our troops. I mean here is the group of—

Saddam Hussein: They started feeling that there is hope.

UM5: Yes, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: I mean there are changes that can possibly take place.

UM5: Excuse me, Sir, not only that, but the ranks were telling the officers, “Our Command did what it could” [*voices overlapping*].

Saddam Hussein: This is the public...

UM4: This is at the public level, Sir!

Tariq Aziz: [*Inaudible.*]

Saddam Hussein: People felt the same way.

Tariq Aziz: [*Inaudible.*]

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Saddam Hussein: And not just within the military, but also among people.

UM4: Yesterday and the day before, every family I would see [*inaudible*].

Saddam Hussein: [*Inaudible.*]

UM4: [*Inaudible*] yesterday and the day before.

Saddam Hussein: Our people have become aware!

UM4: That is why I said our people have changed following the initiative, as well as the army, for sure.

Saddam Hussein: Triangles.

UM4: In addition to the other measures that took place in the last weeks, our army [*inaudible*].

Saddam Hussein: Did you not give cars?

UM4: No.

Saddam Hussein: Several cars, huh?

UM4: No, I did not. We just prepared them.

Saddam Hussein: Yes.

UM4: We still have two days, and once they arrive in the locations, [*inaudible*]. There is no problem, Mr. President, [*inaudible*] because the rest—out of 100 originally, [*inaudible*], the 600 or 700 he was going to bring, and the 300 are the ones we wanted to distribute. [*Inaudible*] there is nothing wrong with it.

[*Time stamp: 40:15*]

Tariq Aziz: Well, the transportation cars are not running great, but are still running despite the bombing—

UM4: Have we assigned drivers? The Jordanians [*inaudible, laughing*].

Tariq Aziz: Going back and forth.

UM4: Yes.

Tariq Aziz: I said—this Palestinian, Yasser ‘Abd Rabboh, said you see the driver holding a cigarette in his mouth and sitting [*inaudible*].

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UM4: The Iraqis are really predatory animals, there are some good Jordanians, but they do not kill four! [*Laughing.*]

Saddam Hussein: Well, they are not experienced in combat.

UM4: Yes, but they are all heroes.

Tariq Aziz: [*Inaudible.*]

UM4: I mean here at the Jordanian-Iraqi Joint Transportation Company, I just sent them a driver [*inaudible*]. I mean they are civilized, Mr. President!

Saddam Hussein: Yes, yes.

UM4: The first time they told me [*inaudible*]. I said, “Why? [*Inaudible*].” Two drivers for each car. This driver is for the pick-up and that one [*inaudible*].

Saddam Hussein: Yes, helping him.

UM4: The truck driver?

Saddam Hussein: Yes, yes, and keep him company on the road.

UM4: No, we finished in 12 hours [*inaudible*].

UM7: [*Inaudible*] Abu-Usama.

UM5: [*Inaudible.*]

Tariq Aziz: Didn’t Abu-Usama tell you about the joke that happened over there? Abu-Usama arrived at night, and the next day I took him with me to Moscow and Peking.

Saddam Hussein: He told us. He said, “I was at what’s it called and then Tariq showed up...”

Sa’dun Hammadi: No, he was sitting and then —

Tariq Aziz: I was there before him and then Dr. Sa’doun came. Abu-Usama and I were sitting. I conferred with him and said [*inaudible*] [*Dr. Sa’doun Hammadi laughs*].

Sa’dun Hammadi: I said, “Give me the paper [*inaudible*].

Tariq Aziz: No, I said, “Hey boy, bring the paper. Where is the paper? You need to bring the paper now.”

Saddam Hussein: [*Inaudible.*]

[All laughing.]

Tariq Aziz: After that, [inaudible]. You told me and I believed you [all laughing].

UM7: And the one on China, you also told him about the one on China.

Tariq Aziz: No, I did not read the one on China because I know Abu-Usama [inaudible] the paper and sign it. I had Ziyad hand it over to him at night [Laughing].

UM4: He said he did not go [inaudible] today.

Tariq Aziz: No, I asked him, “How is Abu-Usama?” This man is a friend of his son. He replied, “it is all because of you, I told him goodnight, but he did not answer, the doctor. [Perhaps a reference to Dr. Sa’doun Hammadi].

[All laughing.]

Tariq Aziz: I said he has the right not to [inaudible].

Saddam Hussein: But this time he would not have answered you had you told him. You can back from China and the Soviet Union and you are still asking him what happened in the Soviet Union! Problems.

Tariq Aziz: We are done dealing with the Iranians this time.

Sa’dun Hammadi: Yes.

Tariq Aziz: The Iranians are courteous, which causes delays. I mean they do not accomplish work quickly and they delay people. All day—

Saddam Hussein: Like all new revolutions, they talk too much.

Tariq Aziz: [Inaudible.]

UM4: How about the president of [inaudible], watching TV and [inaudible]. Every meeting [inaudible].

Saddam Hussein: Is there any news? When the group discussion starts with everything [inaudible].

Tariq Aziz: They do not work, Sir. I have been talking a lot with the Iranians lately. I talked to them more than once.

UM4: [Inaudible.]

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Tariq Aziz: This axis is still far, I mean in Hafr-al-Baten!

UM4: No, [*inaudible*], close.

Tariq Aziz: Huh?

UM4: [*Inaudible.*]

Tariq Aziz: [*Inaudible.*]

UM4: [*Inaudible.*]

Saddam Hussein: [*Inaudible.*] Where is the 54th Division?

UM5: The 45th, Sir... over there, Sir.

[*Inaudible short conversation about the 45th Division.*]

UM4: Well, if this is the way they will continue working—

Tariq Aziz: Do you think they are now—

Saddam Hussein: This is the 54th.

[*Time stamp: 45:30*]

UM5: The 54th is in the 1st Corps sector, Sir, the right wing, and the 45th is in the 7th Corps wing.

Sa'dun Hammadi: But the position?

UM5: The position, yes. This is the position, Sir, the French position, right?

UM4: Yes.

Tariq Aziz: The French [*position*] is here?

UM4: Yes.

Tariq Aziz: You mean not in this battle.

[*All answer no.*]

Tariq Aziz: Here are the Americans.

UM5: The Americans were at the 26th. They were the ones who came to [*and attacked*] the covering troops.

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Tariq Aziz: Hmm.

UM5: The French also came and attacked the covering troops. However, they remained in the attack location.

Saddam Hussein: By God, by the troops!

UM5: By the troops. Yes, Sir.

[*Inaudible short conversation.*]

Saddam Hussein: With the artillery they want to [*inaudible*].

UM5: They continue in their attack, Sir.

Tariq Aziz: The French Division attacked Al-Dlayb Brigade and during their leave, they went to the market to have a French style haircut [*inaudible*] [*All laughing*].

[*Inaudible short conversation.*]

Tariq Aziz: This is new in Al-Basra?

UM5: In Basra, yes.

UM4: No, but it is on the old road.

UM5: This is Al-Nasiriyyah, Sir [*inaudible*].

UM4: [*Inaudible.*]

Saddam Hussein: From over there. [*Inaudible short conversation*] Where the [*inaudible*] Nasiriyyah do borders end?

UM5: Sir, Al-Shuyoukh market is here.

Saddam Hussein: Yes.

UM5: Go down. [*Inaudible short conversation.*] In the direction of... here is Al-Shuyoukh market, Sir, and this is Al-Nasiriyyah. Here is Al-Samawa. [*Inaudible short conversation*] after that, there is Al-Diwaniyyah. Here is Al-Najaf.

Saddam Hussein: [*Inaudible.*]

UM5: It was in the direction of Karbala, Sir.

Sa'dun Hammadi: Huh?

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UM5: The Americans were in the direction of Karbala.

Saddam Hussein: Where?

UM5: This one, Sir, is in the direction of Al-Salman, I mean it leads to Al-Samawa. This is the 54th Division and this is Al-Samawa.

Saddam Hussein: [*Inaudible*] 54th?

UM5: This is the 53rd, Sir. I mean the 54th, Sir. The map is not clear. Focus on the axis, Sir, so that you can get the picture. Let us start with Al-Nasiriyyah. The 7th Corps that ends with the 45th Division, Sir. The wing of the 45th Division goes in the direction... I mean the 26th and 45th go in the direction of Al-Nasiriyyah. Therefore, Sir, any direction within this axis would mean the south; I mean it goes to Al-Nasiriyyah either after planning or... according to our analysis, even if it is exaggerated, [*inaudible*], however, we were predicting they would have to take this direction in order to go to Al-Nasiriyyah.

Saddam Hussein: On the road and [*inaudible*].

UM5: Yes, Sir, they would have to cross the entire southern sector, in order to strike the Republican Guard or Al-Qurneh.

Tariq Aziz: They have indicated this on the map, because it is easy to enter this way, isolate the troops, confine our line of communication, and conduct a Marine landing here to the north of Kuwait city, I mean the Bobian region and so on, and at the same time, they would control [*inaudible*].

UM4: [*Inaudible.*]

Tariq Aziz: No, it has been drawn, Sir, in [*inaudible*].

Saddam Hussein: I do not know if you remember, but I had my reservations even regarding the 1st Corps. I insisted on keeping it at the defense wing because we were exhausted and I wanted it to rescue our troops [*inaudible*].

[*Time stamp: 51:02*]

UM4: The airdrop, Abu-Ziyad [*Tariq Aziz*], has become a problem now.

Saddam Hussein: [*Inaudible*] all troops.

Tariq Aziz: [*Inaudible.*]

UM4: In addition, we made sure that the airdrop bases [*inaudible*].

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UM5: Your Excellency, being over protective sometimes...

UM4: Only by airdropping...

UM5: Does not allow us to carry out the missions, [*inaudible*], Sir.

Saddam Hussein: Yes.

UM5: There will be exaggeration. I suggest to Your Excellency [*inaudible, other people talking*] that we take some of the Kuwaiti troops. I suggest controlling the three units we have by us so that we will not be affected by this big concentration.

Saddam Hussein: Because if it is from the direction of our wing [*i.e., flank*], our wing would become weak, and this would allow them to penetrate.

UM5: Excuse me, Sir, I did not mean from the direction of our wing, rather to increase the watch troops in Kuwait to avoid being surrounded, especially in the last stage, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: It is [*inaudible*] some time. However, this issue creates a problem for us. That is to say, you either stay by force or leave for good.

UM5: Yes.

Saddam Hussein: We cannot do it 50/50. Otherwise, we would stay there.

UM5: We are—

Tariq Aziz: No, thank God, it is good.

Sa'dun Hammadi: One last remark, Sir. You may still notice that the Americans came here to spread information, such as handing over this much and 1,200 while this allegation has no foundation. In addition, [*inaudible*], when we issue a statement, the first thing we should say is, "These are American troops," if they were American. We should say it. We do not mind submitting an estimate, stating they had this many casualties and this many losses in materials. I mean we must say, this reaches [*inaudible*]"—

Tariq Aziz: [*Inaudible*] when he says—

Sa'dun Hammadi: But to say, "We stopped them and so on. Things in general..."

Tariq Aziz: When he says that we occupied Failaka, we must say, "Bring photographers and we will show them Failaka."

Saddam Hussein: Why do we have to talk about specific matters here, bring [*inaudible*]!

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Sa'dun Hammadi: The specifics of our losses, Sir—

Saddam Hussein: [*Inaudible*] How can we talk about the enemy's losses without seeing them?

Tariq Aziz: If you allow me, Sir, I have a comment on this idea.

Saddam Hussein: Yes.

Tariq Aziz: In order to expose the American allegation, we should say that we did occupy Failaka. When we broadcast an announcement, we should say, "We challenge you. Bring photographers and let them see what is happening in Failaka."

UM4: We should make a statement about it.

Tariq Aziz: Yes. "As for the prisoners, if you really say you captured 10,000 people, we challenge you to show them on TV," because they prohibited...Sir, yesterday, Cheney ordered a stop of the media. If they come and say, "We have 10,000 prisoners; we challenge you and we will show them on TV. If you have journalists, [*inaudible*]."

UM5: [*Inaudible.*]

UM4: [*Inaudible*] the Minister of Defense?

Tariq Aziz: No, No, it was the [*American*] president's order. Their president issued an order not to give any information at all. Even that last one, the one who gives the daily briefing at the Pentagon told me, "There will be no more briefings. From now on no more briefings because our lives are in jeopardy in [*inaudible*]."

Sa'dun Hammadi: He lied. If we—

Tariq Aziz: If they talk this way, we will challenge them and say—

Sa'dun Hammadi: If we do not issue information and neither do they, how is American public opinion going to count the losses?

Tariq Aziz: There will be lots of lies!

Sa'dun Hammadi: Therefore, [*inaudible. From this point on, the quality of the audio rapidly deteriorates.*]

Saddam Hussein: [*Inaudible*] noticeable statement.

Tariq Aziz: However, we should make an effort [*inaudible, voices overlapping.*]

Saddam Hussein: [*Inaudible.*]

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[The rest of the audio is inaudible.] **END OF RECORDING**